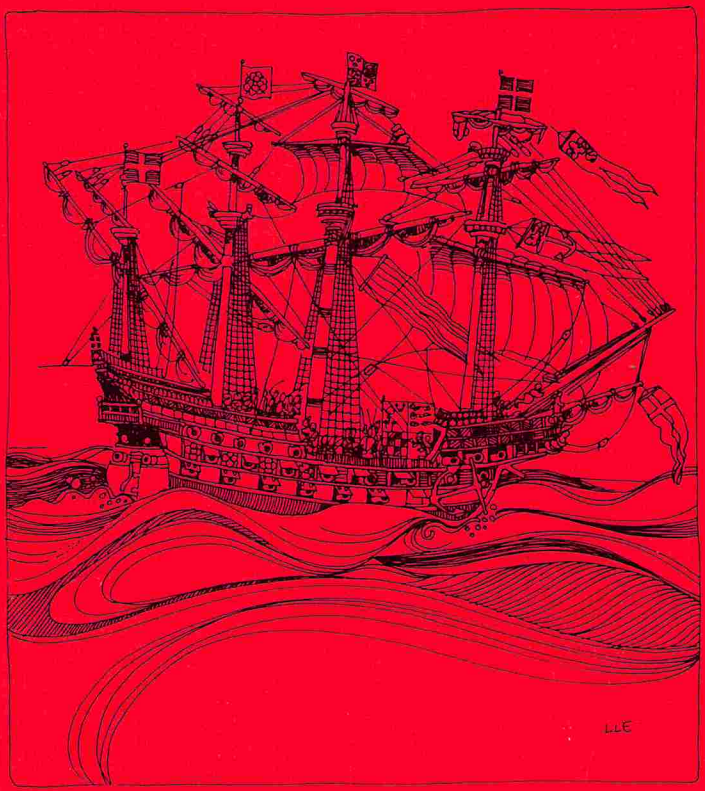
REFORMATION TODAY



1588 . . . 1988?

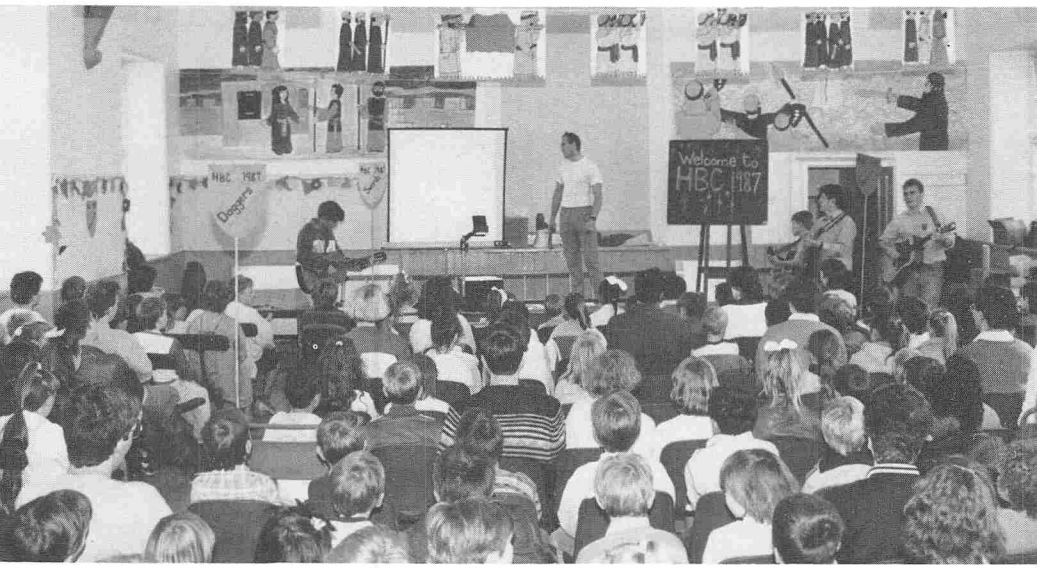
■ NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 1987

100

Front Cover:
The 'Ark Royal', flagship to her majesty Queen Elizabeth's fleet in 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada. What failed by invasion from the outside in 1588 is on course to succeed by inward betrayal in 1988. See page 23 following. The drawing is by Lawrence Littleton Evans and the new typographical layout for RT 100 *is by Neil Hulse.*

Pictures below:
This year about 200 children attended the week long Holiday Bible Club, organized by Belvidere Road Church, Liverpool. Not only does HBC provide an outstanding opportunity for Gospel preaching, but it also creates open doors in the area around the church and goodwill which is often discovered in house to house visiting. The character of the work is very much in accord with the principles brought out in the review article, 'Youth Work Today'.

Photos by David Harrison.



100 issues reviewed

As we celebrate 100 issues of *Reformation Today* we look back to the first issue and ask questions. Has progress been made? Is our vision as strong and as clear as it was in January 1970 when the first issue was published?

'Reformation Today', January 1970

During the first week of the seventies the first Carey Conference took place at Wadderton, Birmingham. About 40 ministers attended. It was the first conference of its kind in Britain for 157 years. This year 160 attended at the University of Liverpool. The purpose of the first conference was to apply the resurgence of historic Reformed Theology to our Baptist churches and denominations today. Walter Chantry, David Kingdon, Herbert Carson and myself were the principal speakers. Included in *R.T. 1* was a Baptist history guide rather like Clapham Railway Junction (supposedly the largest railway junction in the world situated just south of central London). Out of that first conference came David Kingdon's book *Children of Abraham*, and the book *An Introduction to the Baptists*. Both volumes are in the process of being updated (see articles 'The Reformation and the Anabaptists' *R.T. 94* and *95*). Our work load requires that we have to depend on the help of others, steadily build up our files, and then seek an opportunity of a few days to collate materials.

With regard to progress so much has been made in various parts of the world that it has become clear that an effort should be made to keep records. Pastor Bill Payne of Burlington, Ontario (who besides his work as pastor also teaches in the Seminary at Jarvis Street) has written a short work with the title, *A History of the Sovereign Grace Movement with special reference to Canada*. He traces the watershed back to 1955.

Through the prompting of Bill Payne we are accumulating writings and storing correspondence which documents the growth of the contemporary Reformed movement throughout the world, but with special reference to the Reformed Baptists. The worldwide work is difficult for any one agency to keep up with. There is a wide diversity of leadership. One of the most thrilling aspects is to observe a new generation of vigorous church planters being raised up in other nations. Next March and April my wife and I hope to take a world tour in which we might have an opportunity to witness just part of this growth first hand. As far as history is concerned the magazine *Reformation Today* together with Carey Publications is in a unique position to provide a base to collate historical data concerning recent history. Correspondence is welcomed and any data will be carefully handled.

Our interest is not confined to the period from 1970 to the present. We are interested too in the period covering the time from the end of Spurgeon's ministry up to about 1960. What happened to the cause of free grace during that period? The life of A. W. Pink provides some light on that period. Iain Murray of the Banner of Truth has just completed a book on Australian evangelical history. A similar work from a Calvinistic perspective is needed for South Africa. Please correspond with us if you have information to share on this subject.

Has progress been made?

Some question whether the Reformed Baptist movement has lost its way or perhaps has lost its initial zeal and determination. We have to be careful in making an assessment for a movement which is now so widespread and which is increasing rapidly in some countries. Many Reformed Baptist churches have come into existence in many more nations and it is difficult to keep up with the growth. Obviously there are teething problems and new churches have had to come through great traumas and testings. But as in the days of rebuilding under Haggai and Zechariah we must never fall into the trap of despising the day of small things.

When I hear criticism of the Reformed Baptist movement I ask the question which part of the movement? The English part? South or North? – or which part of the U.S.A.? or is the critic talking about Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa, Kenya, Spain, the Caribbean, Nigeria, or Yugoslavia? With Geoff Thomas preaching at the Third Reformed Conference in Brazil we may be hearing about an emerging Reformed Baptist movement there too! The seed has been planted in many nations and we have been humbled to see how quickly it can grow when the leadership is spiritual and gifted, and where there is persevering outreach. This bi-monthly magazine endeavours to encourage such work but is only one agency which does so. For instance the Jarvis Street Baptist Church with its Seminary hosts an international Baptist conference every second year. The number of church planting ventures backed by Jarvis Street is tremendous and among other places includes Quebec, the Caribbean, Spain, France, Madagascar and Fiji.

Church planting with the emphasis on evangelistic endeavour is only one part of the Reformed Baptist movement. What about winning back the mighty Southern Baptist Convention (the largest evangelical denomination in the world), back to the faith of their illustrious founding fathers? (See *An Introduction to the Southern Baptists* by Tom Nettles, Carey Publications, £1.20, available in America from Puritan Reformed, details on back cover.) In a report with the title *Southern Baptist Upgrade* (which is held over) Tom Nettles describes the Southern Baptist Convention held in June this year. There were 25,000 messengers which adopted an annual budget of 140 million dollars including 66 million for foreign missions. Dr Nettles writes, 'In 1979 concerned conservatives devised a plan by which the controlling powers of Convention structure could be moved into the hands of those who held to the basic orthodox doctrines of the faith. It was estimated at that time that it would take approximately ten years for control of these agencies and institutions to be gained. Right now, this figure appears to be remarkably correct.' He goes on to document the last statement.

And what about many other Baptist Unions and denominations? Should we not be thinking positively as to how downgrade can be turned into upgrade? We have heard of the Stanmore Baptist Church in N.S.W. Australia (Pastor Jim Hogg) and how the united stand for biblical principles by that one church has affected the whole union of several hundred churches.

Since *R.T.* began in 1970 we have come through the prolonged storm of the Charismatic challenge. Think of the contribution of Reformed Baptists on this

issue. Important works have been produced by them. Victor Budgen's *The Charismatics and the Word of God*, has been the most popular.

Many have had to face up to and reconsider the whole question of the Invitation System. Without the help of Tom Nettles and the editorial assistance of Don Stephens, here in Liverpool, I could not have written the book *The Great Invitation* which sold out at the Founders Conference reported in these pages. Balanced soteriology is of the utmost importance and it is here in the main body of theology that we derive our inspiration from the Puritans and their progeny, pastors and leaders like Jonathan Edwards (see review article of Michael Haykin), C. H. Spurgeon and those founding fathers of the S.B.C. alluded to above: W. B. Johnson, J. L. Dagg, J. P. Boyce, John A. Broadus, B. H. Carroll and other great preachers and systematic theologians. Tom Nettles' article in this issue reminds us of the necessity to maintain the doctrine of the Puritans with regard to divine sovereignty and human responsibility. Imbalance here has proved fatal in the past. Hyper-Calvinism is a disaster. The Strict Baptists in England foundered on those rocks and many of them remain there still, some immovably fixed. The most powerful lifting gear seems ineffective and even men like Bunyan don't seem to move them to see that his way of preaching the free offer is the best way.

This leads directly to the subject of evangelism. At the first Carey Conference I called for dynamic evangelism based on dynamic theology. The review of the book *Christian Youth Work* discusses some of the main issues involved in evangelism today.

Is our vision as strong and as clear as it was in 1970?

Yes, it is! It is also broader. Expansion brings problems. Have you ever heard of a large family growing without pains? There are serious eldership problems in some countries. It is a matter of urgency that exposition be given to church government. The sun shining above is never in the noonday position but it is above some church in difficulty with regard to this matter.

Included at the heart of the matter is the subject of inter-dependency. That every church is self governing we do not deny but very soon independency can become isolationism and then that in turn can soon lead to un-Christlike irresponsible attitudes about the universal body of Christ. It is inconceivable that the Head of the Church does not care equally for all the believing churches. Whether we unite the way the Irish Baptists do by union, or whether we do it by association, can be assessed in each area, but we cannot go on suffering from fragmentation and the lack of working together with common aims of church planting and missionary endeavour. No church is an island on its own. The golden lampstand in the Tabernacle which is so elaborately depicted in Zechariah chapter 4, and is again referred to in Revelation chapters 2 and 3, did not consist of seven separate lamps all apart from each other. They were all joined to one stem. All believing churches are sustained by the same Holy Spirit and ruled by one King.

It is of paramount importance that we work intelligently toward greater unity and seek to root out the evils seen in causes which wither and die in their isolation. One assembly in these parts has been looking for the right man for 19 years! Perhaps they should take Spurgeon's advice when he suggested to a church which was not prepared to sacrifice to support a minister that they send a telegram to call the angel

Gabriel who would not have to be clothed and would not have to be fed after his sermons, because he could return straight back to heaven! But at least that assembly still talks about calling a pastor. Too many assemblies deny the specific call and recognition of pastors who sometimes sacrifice rich remuneration to devote their lives fulltime to the ministry. We have promised to concentrate on this subject at the next Carey conference here in Liverpool booked for January 5th to 7th 1988.

Nor can we think to go it alone with missionary endeavour, which subject leads to the work of agencies such as Grace Baptist Mission here in the U.K. At Belvidere Road we have just been through the extremely encouraging and happy exercise of sending out a missionary fully supported by our local church. Yet that exercise has included the cooperation with other agencies on the mission field. While the missionary is directly joined to the sending and supporting church we note well that there are works which from a practical point of view can only be done by missionary agencies. For instance G.B.M. is involved with radio and literature work as well as pioneering work in countries like Bangladesh, India and Muslim nations which will never be accomplished by busy pastors on their own or even churches on their own unless they are extremely well endowed with full time workers.

Of great encouragement is the development and progress of R.B.M.S. (Reformed Baptist Missionary Services, Mission Coordinator David K. Straub) in the U.S.A. The R.B.M.S. *Missionary Update*, being the quarterly newsletter of the R.B.M.S. is very well produced and highly commended for all who wish to support missionary endeavour (address: P.O. Box 289 CARLISLE, P.A. 17013).

The Theology of our Evangelical Generation

As we review our foundational interests in this 100th issue of the magazine we remember the most fundamental issue of all, theology. In other words theology, the knowledge of God, is 'the bottom line'. *Foundations of the Christian Faith* is essentially a popular and Systematic Theology and extremely readable. The subjects run in about the same order as Calvin's *Institutes.* Many themes are handled which Calvin did not handle and of course late 20th century challenges are grappled with against the background of 150 years of Liberal domination in the academic arena. This significant book forms an ideal basis for reviewing theological issues.

'Reformation Today' and our interest in history and biography

Wisdom dictates that we should always have a very firm grip on the history of the Church through all ages. Only then can we engage in reformation. A reformed church should always be reforming. As soon as it stops it settles for tradition. As Baptists we try to learn all we can from history. We must always avoid mythology and fiction. We must be firm in our rejection of the medievalism that remained in the reformers Calvin and Luther (for a brilliant and scholarly survey of that read *Renaissance and Reformation* by William R. Estep, Eerdmans in U.S.A. and Paternoster, £18.00, in U.K.) and equally firm in rejection of the notion that we can trace pure Baptist churches through history. Hence included in this issue is the article by James McGoldrick, 'The Trail of Blood'.

A National Peril

The study of history also affects us in a most profound way as we face a national peril here in Britain. As we see from the major prophets of the Old Testament

God deals with individual nations. We have no reason to suppose that he has ceased to deal with nations as such. Britain has a most remarkable record with regard to the Bible from the days of John Wycliffe and the Lollards right up to the establishment of the Banner of Truth Trust in 1957, an agency which like so many others from Britain has had a distinctive Reformed influence round the world. The work of the Evangelical Press has been steadily advancing particularly in overseas languages. These ministries have characterised the testimony of this country. Are we going to stand by and see our heritage tampered with? In *R.T.* 99 the eight page booklet *Where is the Ecumenical Movement Taking Us?* was included. Since then a public meeting has taken place in which David Samuel, the director of Church Society explained the great disaster which seems to be overtaking our nation. While good evangelical men are fast asleep the Church of England is being quietly handed over to the Roman Catholic church. That will lead to Britain no longer being a Protestant nation, but like Poland and Italy becoming Roman Catholic. (How many Evangelical and Reformed missionaries are sent out into the world from those countries?)

We are not C. of E., but we are not going to stand by and do nothing. Hence some pages in this issue are devoted to telling the facts of the situation. We will seek to encourage those ministers in the C. of E. who are courageous reformers. Recently pastor John Palmer came and addressed our mid-week prayer meeting. We heard a 45 minute description of what happened in 1588 and 1688. All present were edified and stirred. John Palmer is willing to speak at other churches on these themes. No cassette is available. However a recording was made of David Samuel's address, referred to above, and the cassette can be obtained from the Eurobooks address on the inside back cover (£1.90 including postage).

The Importance of Faith

To Habakkuk who was experiencing 'anfechtung' (the German word used to describe the horror of darkness, perplexity, the trauma of desertion, the agony of disappointment, disillusionment and despair, the word used to describe Luther's deepest depressions), the Lord's message was, *'but the righteous will live by his faith'* (Hab 2:4).

I have noted throughout my pastoral experience and constant contact with churches all over the world that young newly planted churches often go through times of great testing at the beginning, then when tried and ready they grow wonderfully and have a season of much rejoicing. Everything is wonderful. However all those new converts are raw and require much discipline and correction and so the churches are plunged again into times of testing. But it is all essential experience, all part of progressive sanctification. It is childish to try and maintain a constant state of euphoria. The way forward is always the way of faith. We have been given many open doors. Let us persevere in faith, observing particularly the message of promise given to Habakkuk, namely, 'The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea' (2:14).

The Human side of Divine Sovereignty

Thomas J. Nettles

Among the wonders of Scripture are its clarity and sufficiency. Though filled with the glories of eternity in its language, Scripture never leaves the reader to grapple with mere abstractions. Concrete examples of its ethical principles and theological categories fill the page of the Bible and are waiting to reward the earnest student. Even those words that describe the counsels of God in eternity past sweeping forward into eternity future find expression in historical accounts of disarming simplicity. The story of Lydia's conversion in Acts 16 is pregnant with possibilities of theological inference.

1. God's determination to save Lydia

Lydia's conversion, narrated in Acts 16, illustrates Paul's description of God's purpose in salvation in Romans 8

> For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.
>
> Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified (Rom 8:29-30).

The first three of this golden chain, foreknown, predestinated, and called, are particularly and clearly portrayed in this passage.

We can safely conclude that none are finally glorified who were not formerly foreknown. There are those whose names were engraved from eternity on the palms of God's hands (Isa 49:16). They are the sheep that he knows (Jn 10). The word *foreknow* does not imply a mere precognition or prescience but an affectionate, special and tender regard for, prior to the actual establishment of the reciprocal relationship. Dr Roy Beaman of Mid-America Seminary in Memphis, Tennessee, establishes this concept unequivocally.

> 'Foreknow' means the same as 'know' in Psalm 1:6, 'For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish.' No one would claim that there is a blank place in the mind of God in not foreseeing the way of the wicked. He knows beforehand all things good and bad. He knows the way of the righteous in the sense of caring for and setting his affection upon their way. All that they do concerns him. Therefore, God foreknew some in the sense of making them objects of his love and concern and will finally bring the same number to salvation in time through repentance and faith and to glory in the future.

Thus the first part of God's determination to save Lydia was his choosing her in particular as an object of that 'great love with which he loved us'. He foreknew her. We know this is true because it is only out of *that* love that he makes us alive with Christ (Eph 2:4,5).

Next, as is clear from Romans 8 and our

text in Acts 16, he predestinated her. Predestination is a large word which means God has not only loved Lydia individually beforehand, but has planned all the means by which she would come to hear the gospel. The comprehensive scope of predestination is seen in Ephesians 1:11, when Paul says, 'We have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to his purpose who works all things after the counsel of his will.' God's providential ordering of events leading to this movement is quite remarkable. At some time in her past, Lydia, a Gentile, had become acquainted with the Jewish Scriptures and had embraced the Messianic hope, seeing indeed that the Gentiles would come to his light. She had established, by God's grace, a pattern of study and prayer common to such people, so that Paul could accurately predict when and where he would find a group of Gentiles (Acts 16:13) familiar with the Old Testament rudiments of his gospel.

Additionally, the events by which God brought Paul to Philippi are remarkable. In some way, according to verse 6, the Holy Spirit had forbidden Paul and Silas to go to Asia. Again, the Spirit of Jesus stopped them from going into Bithynia. A vision came to Paul revealing Macedonia as the place of ministry. Then one day God providentially led them to the riverside and a foreknown, predestined woman named Lydia heard the gospel. Charles Spurgeon pictures predestination as an outrider that precedes the army, bringing the costly jewel of salvation into the world. He preaches

> Then came Predestination. Predestination did not merely mark the house, but it mapped the road in which Salvation should travel to that house; Predestination ordained every step of the great army of Salvation; it ordained the time when the sinner should be brought to Christ, the manner how he should be saved, the means that should be employed; it marked the exact hour and moment, when God the Spirit should quicken the dead in sin, and when peace and pardon should be spoken through the blood of Jesus. Predestination marked the way so completely that Salvation doth never overstep the bounds, and it is never at a loss for the road. In the everlasting decree of the Sovereign God, the footsteps of Mercy were every one of them ordained. As nothing in this world revolves by chance – as even the foreknown station of a rush by the river is as fixed as the station of a king – it was not meet that Salvation should be left to chance; and therefore God has mapped the place where it should pitch its tent, and the time when it should arrive there.

Now to our third element 'called'. Our text has it in these words, 'The Lord opened her heart.' This is an activity only God can perform. Paul could not open her heart. Even Lydia could not open her own heart. Left to herself she would have been like the 'Devout women' who in Antioch of Pisidia were party to instigating a persecution against Paul and Barnabas, leading them to shake off the dust of their feet against them. You see, we have a salvation that says not only, 'If you can get to Jesus you are safe,' but also says 'I will get you to Jesus'. The medieval papists tell the story of St Dennis, who was beheaded and afterward picked up his head and walked 2,000 miles. The 2,000 miles has been done by many people. Picking up the head to take the first step is the difficult part. Charles I had a clear escape set for him if only he could have made it out of the window at Carisbrooke Castle. Everything else was done for him. All he had to do was get out of the window. He couldn't, and he paid for it with his head.

Reflecting on this reality, Spurgeon again speaks

> And if God does require of the sinner – dead in sin – that he should take the first step, then he requireth just that which renders salvation as impossible under the gospel as ever it was under the law, seeing man is as unable to believe as he is to obey,

> and is just as much without the power to come to Christ as he is without power to go to heaven without Christ. The power must be given him of the Spirit. He lieth dead in sin; the Spirit must quicken him. He is bound hand and foot and fettered by transgression; the Spirit must cut his bonds, and then he will leap to liberty, God must come and dash the iron bars out of their sockets, and then he can escape from the window, and make good his escape afterwards; but unless the first thing be done for him, he must perish as surely under the gospel as he would have done under the law.

But our text has the gracious words, 'The Lord opened her heart.' Without question, the heart must be opened – that is, the will, affection, mind, and conscience – for it is with the heart man believes and is justified (Rom 10:9,10). What is this heart-work of God? Moses, in Deuteronomy 30:6, called it circumcision of the heart. Ezekiel called it taking out the heart of stone and putting in a heart of flesh, or giving a new heart and a new spirit (Ez 36:26); Jeremiah called it writing the law on the heart (Jer 31:33). Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, 'For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined *in our hearts* to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' God opened her heart in the same way Jesus opened the disciples' minds in Luke 24:45. This is his fulfilment of the New Covenant. God is a covenant-keeping God, who makes those who were not a people the people of God, and comes to those who had not obtained mercy and gives them mercy. He does write his law on hearts, thus making them new. He is a God who opens hearts.

Next, we need to notice that Lydia responded. She gave heed and continued to give heed. Her mind was focused on what Paul was saying. When God opens the heart, the mind pays careful attention. In fact Lydia responded so thoroughly that she was baptized, and her household. Perhaps Euodia and Syntyche, mentioned in Philippians 4, were among her helpers in the dyeing business and among those baptized. Lydia was so engulfed by God's grace that she constrained Paul and his party, by moral force and persuasion, to use her home. A. T. Robertson comments, 'Lydia had her way as women usually do.'

The order and connection of 'God opened-Lydia responded' form a significant phrase worthy of attention.

We are so bound by the dimensions of time and space that we find it difficult to conceive of an order within the moral dimension that does not partake of the space or time lapses indicated by the use of the words 'before' and 'after' in those dimensions. But biblically we must see that though there is a moral fitness in the progression of God's work in the soul, and that there is an external work of God (i.e., justification), as well as an internal work (regeneration), some salvific realities can by definition only exist where other realities are also present. Though progressive in moral fitness, they are coexistent or concurrent in experience. A. H. Strong provides us with a possible physical model of this when he hypothesises a cable sheathed in a non-expandable material, stretched from one side of the Atlantic to the other, filled with an incompressible liquid. The moment the liquid is pushed on this side it moves on the other. The cause and the effect are simultaneous.

Even so, in discussing the new heart and repentance and faith, we must be careful not to treat them as abstract realities that have a separate existence independent of each other. In the same way that there is no true repentance that is not accompanied by faith, and no evangelical faith that is not permeated with evangelical repentance, even so there is no regeneration that is not permeated with both repentance and faith. If one's heart does

not have some degree of hatred for sin, there can be no repentance. If there is no element of love for Christ, there can be no faith. Only a work of God's Spirit can grant a heart such a hate and such a love. But by the same token, where this hate and love exist, repentance and faith are thereby present. Sorrow for and hatred of sin, and reverent loving trust in the person and work of Christ, constitute the essence of the New Covenant heart. Regeneration (God's work), and conversion (man's turning), are two sides of the one thing. In other words this grace takes off and lands at the same time. God opened, Lydia responded – the divine and human dimensions of one reality.

In the same way, faith and repentance have no independent existence apart from union with Christ. What is faith? It is trust in Christ alone for salvation. Can faith exist as an ontological entity without beholding, all the time from its very inception, Christ as the only hope? No! Does repentance have any separate existence apart from its actual manifestation as hatred of sin and desire for the holiness of God? No! Though repentance and faith are the means of union with Christ, they cannot exist independent of union with Christ and the free gift of righteousness he brings with him.

Regeneration, therefore, or the opening of the heart, is the work of God's Spirit in giving us life by union with Christ through the graces of repentance and faith.

2. Paul's determination to find Lydia

Let us consider *Paul's* determination to find Lydia. Chapter 16 records his carrying the decision of the Jerusalem Council to the churches established earlier. He sought to go into Phrygia to preach the Word, but was forbidden. He sought to go into Bithynia for the same purpose, but was forbidden. Then he saw a man of Macedonia saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Paul's conclusion according to Luke was, 'the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them'.

Arriving on the Sabbath, Paul and his companions went to the river, a place of prayer. He found, not a man, but only a group of women. Now, in his vision a man had spoken. The reality was women. Did Paul conclude this was no opportunity to preach the gospel? Not at all, but the Scripture tells us that the four men, Paul, Silas, Luke, and Timothy, sat down and spoke to the women who were there. Paul evidently did most of the speaking, because when the Lord opened Lydia's heart, Scripture records that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul.

In this simple narrative we observe, first, the necessity of taking every opportunity for the preaching of the gospel, whether the group be large or small or only one individual. Paul's determination is remarkable.

The appropriateness, no, the necessity of personal evangelism, should not escape our application of this event. When Bible colleges and theological seminaries offer and require courses in Pauline studies, they should also require regular involvement in the Pauline practice of evangelism. To study the life and writings of Paul and never become a part of the passion of Paul would be ludicrous. He not only knew the Scripture and wrote letters in which he systematized the gospel, but he put himself in great danger to take the gospel to people. He wrote to Timothy later, 'Remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead. This is my gospel, wherein I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds, but the Word of God is not bound; therefore, I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ

Jesus with eternal glory.'

Observe, secondly, the necessity of the presented and understood word for salvation. What Lydia paid attention to was not the secret working of the Spirit. She may not have even been aware of that reality. She paid attention to the things spoken by Paul. The secret working of the Spirit produces the concrete reality, and the concrete reality is always present when the gospel is preached. Paul emphasized these two elements when he told the Thessalonians, 'But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.' So Paul could say in Romans 10, faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. But, even though such hearing does not come without the effectual working of the Spirit, neither does it come without a preacher.

We see, thirdly, the earnest desire of Paul that the message be received. In Romans 9 Paul says that he could wish himself accursed from Christ for the sake of his brethren, his kinsmen according to the flesh. He had just finished, in the eighth chapter, a theological exposition demonstrating that those who know Christ cannot be separated from him. He knows, therefore, the theological truth that he could never be separated or accursed from Christ. His cry does not arise from an emotion, fuelled only, or at all, by theological ignorance. He knew very well the pain and the suffering and the terror involved in experiencing the wrath of God. His earnestness is not couched in the image of an ontological fiction. His compassion for his kinsmen was such that he would gladly be cursed from Christ if they would be saved.

Then, in Romans 10:1, after giving the exposition of God's purpose for Israel, which included the stumbling of many over the stone of stumbling and the saving of a remnant, Paul says his heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. Their minds are presently blinded to the necessity of justification by faith. They seek to establish their own righteousness. Only God can make them see. So Paul pleads his desire before the only one who can possibly fulfil it. His understanding of the decree of God diminished neither his passion nor his prayer. This same desire in Paul is seen in his statement before Agrippa, when he said, 'I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds' (Acts 26:29). There is no reason why our desire should not be as intense, if we ourselves have been raised from death to life, if God has opened our hearts, and we know the power of the gospel. Then we cannot bear to see others live in ignorance of it. If we have seen a sinner taken from darkness to light, if we have seen a slave made a son, if we have seen an enemy changed into a friend, then we know that God can do it.

Paul's determination to find Lydia should inspire us to suffer all for the sake of those whom God has foreknown, predestinated, and whom he will call. Paul's insistence on prayer for the Jews, though their blind prejudice and zeal for works-righteousness bound them under condemnation according to the decree of God, should send us to prayer for the lost. Only God can open the heart. And when he bears his mighty right arm to bring salvation, there is no one who can withstand it. We pray that they might be saved. God has said, 'I looked, and there was none to help; and I wondered that there was none to uphold: therefore mine own arm brought salvation unto me: and my fury, it upheld me' (Is 63:5).

Many books on Baptist history, including the most recent contributions, continue to indulge in the mythology that Baptists can trace their line back through the centuries. In a brilliantly documented treatise Dr James McGoldrick cites about fifty principal primary sources as part of a thirty page bibliography. He has used primary sources to prove his thesis that there is absolutely no viable likeness between Baptists today and the various groups which existed before the Reformation, such as the Montanists and Novatians, the Paulicians, Bogomils, Albigenses, and Waldenses. The book prepared by Dr McGoldrick is extremely readable and most valuable for those who cherish and value Church history. As far as publishers are concerned this manuscript is daunting, not only because the detailed footnotes for every chapter form an intrinsic and essential part of the work, but also because the heretical nature of some of the groups described does not provide inspirational reading. Also there is the problem of serious readers, as many are not aware of the difference between authentic history and fiction. Here we present Dr McGoldrick's introduction only. The most interesting chapter of the work in our view is the section on the Waldenses, and it is our hope to publish a considerable part of that chapter in Reformation Today. *Perhaps a publisher in America might be well placed to produce this work, which undoubtedly will have a market among historians and an essential place in hundreds of libraries. The vital and fascinating character of the work will be evident in the sections we print in the magazine. Professional historians interested in documentation will need to correspond direct with Dr McGoldrick, Cedarville College, Box 601, CEDARVILLE, OHIO 45314, U.S.A.*

The Trail of Blood

James McGoldrick

Perhaps no other major body of professing Christians has had as much difficulty in discerning its historical roots as have the Baptists. A survey of conflicting opinions might lead a perceptive observer to conclude that Baptists suffer from an identity crisis. Although the two most popular textbooks used in America to teach Baptist history cite Holland and England early in the seventeenth century as the birthplaces of the Baptist churches,[1] many Baptists object vehemently and argue that their history can be traced across the centuries to New Testament times. Some Baptists deny categorically that they are Protestants and that the history of their churches is related to the success of the Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century.[2]

Those who reject the Protestant character and Reformation origins of the Baptists usually maintain a view of Church history sometimes called 'Baptist Successionism', and claim that Baptists have represented the true Church, which must be, and has been, present in every period of history.[3] The popularity of the successionist view has been enhanced enormously by a booklet entitled *The Trail of Blood,* of which thousands of copies have been distributed since it was published in 1931.[4]

The thesis of *Trail of Blood* appears in its subtitle, 'Following the Christians Down through the Centuries . . . or The History of Baptist Churches from the Time of Christ, Their Founder, to the Present Day.' J. M. Carroll, author of this treatise, explained that the 'blood' in the title signifies suffering, because the true Church has been persecuted throughout history. In fact, it appears that Carroll and some other successionist authors have made the experience of suffering persecution *the* grand distinguishing mark of the true Church. Successionists admit, of course, that the name 'Baptist' cannot be found in every period of the Christian era, but if a group dissented from the Roman Catholic Church and suffered for its nonconformity, successionists have been quick to cite such groups as baptistic proponents of biblical Christianity. In this way, ancient and medieval religious movements such as the Montanists, Novatians, Patarenes, Bogomiles, Paulicians, Arnoldists, Henricians, Albigenses, and Waldenses have been inducted into the line of 'Baptist' succession. A few successionists have claimed that even St Patrick was a Baptist.[5]

As a young undergraduate with a keen interest in history, the author of the present work was introduced to Baptist successionism through reading *Trail of Blood* and was, for several years, a vigorous advocate of that view. Extensive graduate study and independent investigation of Church history has, however, convinced him that the view he once held so dear has not been, and cannot be, verified. On the contrary, surviving primary documents render the successionist view untenable.

Although free church groups in ancient and medieval times sometimes promoted doctrines and practices agreeable to modern Baptists, when judged by standards now acknowledged as baptistic, not one of them merits recognition as a Baptist church. Baptists arose in the seventeenth century in Holland and England. They are Protestants, heirs of the Reformers.

In pursuing this inquiry, an examination of and concentration on *primary* sources is indispensable, for successionist writers have too often documented crucial points in their arguments by reference to dubious secondary sources. Therefore, every effort has been made to consult available documents. Wherever possible, the authors who spoke for the sects in question have been permitted to speak for themselves. Because these sects defied the authority of the Established Church, much of the literature which they composed was destroyed long ago, as, for example, in the case of those groups which were suppressed by the Roman Catholic Inquisition. Enough primary material produced both by the sectarians themselves and by their enemies, has, however, survived, so that an informed judgment about their beliefs and practices is still possible.

Spokesmen for the Baptist successionist view of Church history have tended to dismiss documents produced by opponents of the sects as hopelessly prejudiced and therefore unreliable. As we intend to show, this contention is not always valid, for we possess documents of Roman Catholic and/or Eastern Orthodox

origin that have been cross-checked for accuracy. When two or more hostile sources who have had no evident contact with one another relate the same account, there is a very high degree of probability that the account is substantially correct. Documents of this nature have therefore been cited in my study, but preference has been given to literature which has come from sympathetic sources, wherever that is available.

In a few instances extant documentary evidence about a particular sect or its leader comes from a single hostile witness. Where this condition prevails, judgment must be guarded and tentative. The absence of collateral evidence, nevertheless, does not mean that the extant account necessarily is unreliable, but it does mean that there is no way of either affirming or denying it with certainty. Where this situation arises, the historian must work with the evidence at hand; he is not free to issue conclusions based upon conjecture. It is regrettable that successionist writers have often resorted to conjecture in order to buttress their arguments, and, in some cases, they have altered material quoted from distinguished scholars outside Baptist ranks so as to make it appear to support their position.[6]

Among successionist authors some difference of opinion has arisen as to exactly which nonconformist groups belong to the 'Baptist' line. Advocates of this view are not uniform in their definition of 'succession' either. Carroll reported that he had discovered an unbroken line of true churches across the centuries, and he illustrated his claim with a chart which offers names and dates of the supposedly baptistic bodies.[7] W. A. Jarrel, another Texas Baptist of the nineteenth century, however, preferred to speak of a Baptist 'perpetuity', that is, a succession of true doctrine, 'not a *linked chain* of churches or ministers'.[8]

Since *Trail of Blood* appears to remain the most widely circulated expression of the successionist interpretation, this study will, with the exception of the Bogomils and the intriguing question about St Patrick, be confined to those sects cited by Carroll. This means that no attention will be given to the Hussites and the Lollards of the late Middle Ages, even though some successionists have claimed them as Baptists.[9]

Before proceeding to an examination of the several religious movements owned by the successionists, it is appropriate to mention the doctrinal conviction which has led so many Baptists to seek a line of true churches from the New Testament period to the present. That conviction comes from a particular interpretation of the words of Jesus addressed to Peter, the spokesman for the apostles, after Peter had confessed that Jesus was the Messiah. Our Lord said:

> Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of *Hades* [hell] will not overcome it (Matt 16:17,18). (NIV).

Many successionists believe that the term 'church' (Greek *ecclesia*), wherever it

appears in the New Testament, signifies a local congregation of baptized believers which maintains the pure doctrine taught by Christ and the apostles. Since Christ promised 'the gates of *Hades'* would not prevail against his Church, the true Church must be present in every epoch of history. Carroll, in his chart, claimed to have tracked the march of that Church up to the nineteenth century.

Successionist ecclesiology, then, is generally at variance with the traditional Christian belief in a catholic (universal) Church, and successionists interpret Christ's promise in Matthew 16:18 as a reference to the local congregation. Hence, pure, local, visible churches must have existed throughout Christian history, and Carroll, Jarrel, *et. al.* professed to have found them.

It appears that the successionist scheme of history is practically required by the doctrine of the Church which its advocates maintain. Those who believe that *ecclesia* is used to identify the universal company of regenerate people, as well as particular local congregations of believers, understand the promise of Christ in a different way. They contend that the declaration 'the gates of *Hades* will not overcome it' is a promise of immortality for all members of the mystical body of Christ, which is his universal Church. *Hades* then is taken to signify the grave or the realm of death, and children of God need not fear death because Christ has assured them that they, as members of his Church, will triumph over the grave.[10]

It is evident that one's ecclesiological position will affect greatly one's approach to the study of Baptist history. The author of this book is convinced thoroughly that the New Testament affirms the doctrine of the universal Church, and he therefore feels no obligation to reconstruct the past in such a way as to find ancient and medieval sects that might be called Baptists. That some of the sects to be examined subscribed to particular points of belief which are now regarded as baptistic will become evident as we proceed. It should also become clear, however, that many of the movements claimed by the successionists were neither Baptists nor Christians.

Notes

[1] Henry C. Vedder, *A Short History of the Baptists* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1907); Robert G. Torbet, *A History of the Baptists* (Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1950).

[2] Chester Tulga, *Why Baptists did not Cooperate with the Reformation* (Chicago: Conservative Baptist Association of America, 1958); Vernon C. Lyons, *Why Baptists are not Protestants* (Chicago: Ashburn Baptist Church, n.d.).

[3] W. Morgan Patterson, *Baptist Successionism, a Critical View* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1969).

[4] J. M. Carroll, *The Trail of Blood,* 2nd ed. (Lexington, KY: Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 1931).

[5] W. A. Jarrel, *Baptist Church Perpetuity* (Dallas: Published by the Author, 1894), pp. 472-79.

[6] Patterson, *Successionism,* pp. 30-46, contains a penetrating analysis of this tendency.

[7] *Trail of Blood,* chart.

[8] S. H. Ford, as quoted by Jarrel, *Perpetuity,* 1 (emphasis author's).

[9] See G. H. Orchard. *A Concise History of Baptists from the Time of Christ, Their Founder, to the 18th Century* (Lexington, KY: Ashland Avenue Baptist Church, 1956 reprint of 1838 edition), p. 334.

[10] An extremely cogent defense of the universal Church appears in John Thornbury, *The Doctrine of the Church: a Baptist View* (Lewisburg, PA: Heritage Publishers, 1971), especially pp. 117-30.

A Review of Theology

A review of the book
Foundations of the Christian Faith by James Montgomery Boice
I.V.P., 740 pages.

Such is the comprehensive nature of this systematic theology that a review is like taking stock of theology today: hence the above title.

Extraordinary abilities are required to write a systematic theology which will stand meaningfully and usefully alongside the powerful works that already line our shelves. Why have another systematic theology when we already have Calvin, Robert L. Dabney, John Leadley Dagg, J. P. Boice, Charles Hodge, William T. Shedd, Augustus H. Strong, and Louis Berkhof? Others could be included but the above have been readily available over the last few years. One reason is that theological debate never stands still: it is always moving forward. The Bible is always being challenged, and clear responses are needed.

A further reason is that the older works with their dated style, illustrative materials and names, are like ancient artillery, which may be ineffective not only because it is cumbersome but also because it is not designed to fight the battles of this generation. We would not be without them for reference purposes but if we are thinking of recommending a systematic theology to someone who is only likely to read one, it will have to be immediately relevant. We have always to take the best from the past and move forward attempting to improve in clarity; this is what Boice has attempted. Relevance is always the foremost factor. A living dog is better than a dead lion. But if we use that proverb, then may it be said right away that in theology James Montgomery Boice belongs to the lion species, happily a living lion and not a dead one!

What equipment is required to write a systematic theology that can take its place on the shelves alongside the leading works of the past? First of all there must be a mastery of the languages. Second there must be a capacious and highly discerning grasp of the principles of theology. Thirdly a massive amount

of retentive reading is necessary since the work will not be adequate if the major works both past and present have not been assimilated, analysed and used. Last, but by no means least, there must be a living experience of people and pastoral needs. We must discourage a study of theology which is motivated only by the prospect of academic glory. The liberals have their own academic attainments in view. If we are not writing to advance the glory of God and the spiritual well-being of men then it is better not to write at all.

James Montgomery Boice has had the advantage of a Christian upbringing. His first and most important qualification is that he has served as pastor of the historic Tenth Presbyterian church of Philadelphia since 1968.

What about the intellectual aspect? Boice has earned degrees at Harvard, Princeton Theological Seminary, The University of Basle (Switzerland) and Reformed Episcopal Seminary. He is a strong advocate for the reading of original sources. He reads Latin, Greek, German and French. He has read thoroughly the best known works of the past and among many authors I select a few: Augustine, Luther, Jonathan Edwards, Hodge, Warfield, Machen, James Orr, as well as Epictetus, Suetonius and Thucydides. Many authors known to us are cited in his work and again I select a few at random: John Stott, C. S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, Philip Hughes, Prof John Murray. All references run conveniently at the bottom of the pages.

Dr Boice has written 30 books, four of which have been brought together into the thoroughly up-to-date systematic theology described above. It is interesting to observe that John Calvin's favourite among his own writings was *The Institutes of the Christian Religion.* All through his life Calvin revised and improved this book. The last revision took place in 1559.

The basic outline used by Calvin is his *Christian Institutes* is followed by Boice. The result is 740 pages, compared to Calvin's 1,521 pages in the *Ford Lewis Battles* translation which succeeds in making Calvin as racey as Boice!

Writing on the subject of the Preacher and Scholarship in the recently published book, *Preaching* (E.P., pp 91-2), Boice has this to say:

> Over the years I have developed a number of concerns for which I am nearly always ready to go on a crusade. One is the place of scholarship in preaching. I am convinced that those with the very best minds and training belong in the pulpit, and that the pulpit will never have the power it once had (and ought to have) until this happens.
>
> The preacher must be well studied. To preach exceptionally well he must have understanding of: 1. The scripture he is expounding, 2. The culture into which he is expounding it, and 3. The spirituality and psychology of the people he is helping to obey God's Word. These understandings do not come merely from native abilities or mere observance of life. They come from hard study as the preacher explores the wisdom of both the past and the present to assist him in his task.

The Structure of the Work

Abbreviated for the sake of this review the work is set out as follows:

BOOK 1 On Knowing God. The Scriptures. The Attributes of God. Creation.
BOOK 2 The Fall. The Will. Law and Grace. The Person and Work of Christ.
BOOK 3 The Work of the Holy Spirit. The Christian Life.
BOOK 4 History. The Doctine of the Church. Eschatology.

It is not possible to comment in detail on all these sections and so I will be selective and concentrate on issues of theology which are particularly relevant at the present time.

With the above outline before us we can ask where evangelism today is weakest compared with former times. Through the advent and advance of Liberalism, Christianity has been fearfully damaged. If we were to speak in terms of casaulties it would be like losing 75 percent of an army. Boice is the chairman of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy. We would expect him to be robust on the theme of the infallibility of Scripture and we are not disappointed. The issues are laid before us plainly and dealt with in a most clear and readable fashion which is the hallmark of the whole book.

Moving from Christianity as a whole we think of the evangelical constituency which if likened to the human anatomy, is deformed by a huge soft fat belly of Arminianism. The altar-call has become the mark of evangelical orthodoxy, particularly in America, and in turn has led to all kinds of manipulative techniques. Extravaganzas, entertainments of different kinds, gimmicks, funny stories, and personal anecdotes have taken the place of serious preaching. Since the demise of the serious preachers of Spurgeon's times the main evangelical body has been man-centred. In 10 pages Boice goes to the root of the problem and explains the subject of the bondage of the will. Typically and effectively he uses historical theology as a method of clarifying the teaching of Scripture. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and then Edwards are referred too. It will surprise some to discover that Edwards was the most perceptive of the above named theologians on the subject of the bondage of the will. The reason is that he defined precisely what he meant by 'the will'. He did not take it for granted that his readers would know exactly what he was talking about. This section, pages 208 to 216 should be published as a tract and translated into every language. It would remove that obesity of the free will error which leads to a wrong apologetic in evangelism.

That takes us back to BOOK 1 where the first section on knowing God is refreshingly biblical from an apologetic standpoint. In BOOK 1 the section on the attributes of God is very good but too brief, as is the discussion on creation. The author is right up to date on the way in which Darwinian theory is being discarded, but he loses an opportunity here: while he reasons sweetly and well for creation, he is weak and indecisive in dealing with evolution. He is capable of much better presentation and use of source materials at this point.

In BOOK 2 on the law and the ten commandments he is not in the same league

as some of the Puritans. His bibliography, usually a strong point, is weak at this point. No reference is made to Ernest Kevan's masterpiece *The Grace of Law*, and no mention of Samuel Bolton's *The True Bounds of Christian Freedom.* Thomas Watson is cited, but there were Puritan writers much more profound on the law than he. On the fourth commandment we need to go back to Palmer and Cawdrey to whom was delegated the responsibility of expounding on this subject by the Westminster assembly, and which task they completed in two volumes (1,050 pages). More recently Robert Cox compiled a two volume bibliography on *The Literature of the Sabbath* which indicated the extent of writing that has been produced on the subject. It seems strange that Boice should deny that the sabbath is a creation ordinance when this is so plainly stated in Exodus 20:11 (page 234).

The section on the Person of Christ is mediocre. Evangelicals, generally speaking, are hazy on the subject and this study does little to face up to the great issues concerning the two natures in one Person and the One Personality. Apart from referring to Warfield there are hardly any references to solid treatises on the Person of Christ, which is surprising for one so broad in references to good books. At least we would expect Berkouer to be mentioned. However we have to admit that the Liberals write more because they are unafraid. Evangelicals seem unable to get further than Chalcedon, and remain orthodox.

In the section on the work of Christ, redemption is expounded clearly but particular redemption is left for the reader to conclude, being implied only. David Millier, preaching at the Southern Baptist Convention annual assembly this year was clear when he said:

> In the mind of Jesus there would be nothing general, vague, or indefinite about his death on the cross, but rather he would make a definite atonement which would accomplish particular redemption for all those whom the Father had given him and of them *none* would be lost.

We move to BOOK 3 and discover the same smooth refreshingly readable style. He makes it plain that the N.T. does not teach a second work of the Holy Spirit and shows that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is the equivalent of our being united to Christ in salvation.

The Charismatic challenge is one of worldwide dimensions and enormous implications, so at this point we move forward to refer to the section in BOOK 4, 'Spiritual Gifts'. We are disappointed by serious deficiency here and no reference to those who have laboured with great clarity and precision in this area. There is no reference to Douglas Judisch' excellent treatise on the issue of cessation of the extraordinary gifts, and no reference either to some of the British authors who have written well on these themes. For an author who reads French we are surprised that there is no reference to G. F. Rendal's book on tongues (see *R.T. 95*, p. 32). Boice leaves tongues an open question (see p. 620).

Compared with the literature referred to with regard to the Charismatic Movement which is deficient, the bibliography on baptism is not quite up to

date (p. 587). Jewett and Kingdon is missing and on the other side Marcel and Bromiley.

In BOOK 4 Part 2, *The Church of God* the section I liked particularly was the one on the marks of the church: clear headings which grip the attention are used, with highly relevant material (pp. 576 to 585). We should pray that our churches will have the marks described: A joyous people, a separated people, a truth-rooted people, a missionary people, a united people, and a loving people.

Surprisingly when we come to the essential subject of the covenant there are only three references in the indices compared to almost half a page of references in Calvin, Hodge, Hoeksema and Berkhof. This is a gaping omission! How can we understand the history of redemption without covenant theology?

The strength of Boice's work lies more in the sections which defend the infallibility of Scripture and in the soteriological sections, namely BOOKS 1 and 2. The weakest section is on eschatology. On page 706 Boice's only foundation for pre-millenialism is a vague reference to early Christians which he does not name who believed in a coming personal reign of Christ on earth. This section is very patchy. It would never stand up to the searching thoroughness of A. A. Hoekema's *The Bible and the Future.* It is a great pity that so many missionary societies, and it would seem churches in America as well, make the 'pre-mill' position mandatory. Happily in the U.K. we do not put eschatology in the front rank. Belief in a literal resurrection and in eternal heaven and hell is mandatory.

This review would be lacking if mention was not made of sections in BOOK 4 which are devoted to the meaning of history, especially the sections with the titles, 'The March of Time' (pp. 539ff.) and, 'Christ, the Focal Point of History'. One senses that Boice's wide reading, Thucydides, Tacitus, Josephus and Augustine, is his strength here as it is when he again takes up the theme of modern history in the sections, 'The Secular City', 'The Secular Church', and 'God's City' (pp. 659-687), all of the highest relevance for us today. The author exposes the extent to which the large denominations 'have capitulated to the world's system. That is, they have capitulated in the areas of biblical authority, theology, programmes and methods'. Although much of the application is American orientated these sections are superb and apply to other Western countries as well.

The contemporary character, readability, and helpful division of its subject matter add much to the value of this volume. Some might find the style too casual in places but the human touch is welcome and is kept under control. The character of the book is likely to encourage preachers to present their materials well. We are in great need of preachers like Boice who can theologize in a way which holds the interest of congregations. We often hear complaints that Reformed preachers are heavy or stodgy. The criticism may not always be just, especially since many hearers are conditioned by the mass media and too much TV (Americans as much as seven hours a day, see p. 684), and are likely to be crippled in their powers of concentration.

I am grateful to have this splendidly useful volume on my shelves.

Southern Baptist Founders' Conference

Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, again was the location for the annual Southern Baptist Conference on the Faith of the Founders. This year's conference was the fifth since its institution in 1983. The conference is held annually for the purposes of worship and the encouragement and strengthening of those who labour in Southern Baptist churches, and who affirm the theological heritage of Southern Baptists as manifested in the doctrines of grace and specifically allied truths. Assembled at the conference July 28th-30th were 136 registrants from 27 states to hear speakers addressing various issues related to the main theme, which was 'The Invitation System'.

Following the Tuesday afternoon opening remarks by Ernest Reisinger and his reminder that the preacher has two great weapons at his disposal – God's Word and prayer – those in attendance heard Pastor Richard Moore of Holtville, California. From Psalm 24 Pastor Moore established God's righteous requirements for entering into his presence, principles which bear upon the modern invitation system. The aim of the exposition certainly was to demonstrate that it is difficult to ascend into the presence of the Lord, much more difficult than 'walking an aisle'.

All the messages were complementary to the central theme of the invitation system, with several speakers addressing important matters related to biblical evangelism. 'Our Lord's Personal Evangelism' was the topic addressed by evangelist R. F. Gates from Shreveport, Louisiana. Evangelist Gates sounded the call to attend to private, personal evangelism, with Jesus Christ pointed to as our example. In an examination of Christ's method of evangelism as demonstrated in the story of the rich young ruler of Mark 10, the discovery was made that much is prevalent today in evangelistic efforts which was absent with our Lord, while other matters were present with Christ but are conspicuous by their absence from many modern evangelistic efforts. Those in attendance were exhorted to set forth the gospel in simplicity and faithfulness, with the proper aim of God's glory always before them. A final plea was sounded to pray for a sensitivity and wisdom to seize upon every God-provided opportunity for personal evangelism.

Rob Richey, a doctoral student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, used the testimony of Hopeful in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* to display Bunyan as a great inviter of persons to come to Christ. With additional selections from others of Bunyan's works, and an appeal to Matthew 11:28, reminder was made that though it is difficult, indeed impossible, for sinners to come to Christ on their own, regeneration and calling are the works of God. In this was found great consolation and motivation for calling all men to Christ.

Other speakers addressed issues more directly related to the invitation system itself. Bill Ascol, Pastor of First Baptist Church in Clinton, Louisiana addressed the subject 'Decisional Regeneration' and asked the question, 'Should we demand or encourage a vocal registration of a man's coming to faith in Christ?' Correctly, it was pointed out that man does make a response in the process of salvation, but that is the result of God's working in man, not the prelude to God's working. Pastor Ascol demonstrated the deceptive nature of the modern invitation system and the 'decisions' that are produced, the defective doctrinal presuppositions upon which the concept is based, and the devastating effects of decisional regeneration upon the church. With a final reference to 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, God's ministers

were cautioned against relying upon manipulative methodologies. Rather, they are to rely on the power of God as the message of the gospel is proclaimed.

Tom Ascol, brother of Bill, and pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Cape Coral, Florida, sounded a caution to pastors in situations calling for reform in regard to the invitation system. The biblical principle of accommodation was set forth in a compassionate manner, yet with an urgent call for real reform. With 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 providing the biblical precept, Pastor Ascol asked, 'How far should we go in accommodating others?' He answered, 'As far as is lawfully possible.' Never, however, can this mean a compromise of the truth. The circumcision of Timothy in Acts 16:1-5 was presented as biblical precedent for accommodation, while note was made that the entire concept is based on the nature of God. After all, has not God accommodated us by speaking and making himself known? In redemption, does he not patiently bear with (read 'accommodate') us as we progress in sanctification? A final call was made to look for ways to avoid conflict, yet to persevere with the dismantling of the modern invitation system in our churches.

The Wednesday evening session was held at nearby Maclean Baptist Church, with approximately 190 hearing Pastor Ernest Reisinger address the topic 'Coming to Christ'. Coming to Christ, Pastor Reisinger pointed out, is not a physical, overt act. Nor is it a purely mental act, nor a mystical experience apart from the truth of God's Word. And it is not merely a volitional act. Coming to Christ, however, does involve the recognition of one's own spiritual need, a revelation of Christ to the heart as the only one suitable to meet that need, and a commitment of one's self without reservation to him who alone is able to meet that need. Highlighted were the dangers and errors which ensue from a misunderstanding of these things, and the final point was made that one thing is needed by sinners – coming to Christ! He is closer than the front of the church building, closer even than one's fingertips. Where exists a prayer for mercy, he is there!

Fred Malone, Pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas dealt with 'Assurance and Evangelism' and encouraged those present to pursue assurance for themselves. Such assurance must be based on the elements of a belief in the Word of God made real by the Spirit of God, evidences of God's grace in the heart and life, and the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit. Practical exhortations were given: Let us make our own calling and election sure, thereby being enabled to persevere in every Christian labour. Remember, only God gives assurance, though it is our duty to assure men of Christ and his faithfulness. Beware the 'higher-life' movement and the idea that the questioning of our spiritual state should never occur; the fact of false conversion requires that we test ourselves constantly. Finally, Pastor Malone asked, 'How shall we invite men?' We must do so by preaching the law and the necessity of repentance, and then giving the freest, fullest, tenderest presentation of Christ.

Dr Tom Nettles endorsed and augmented these ideas in his exposition of Hebrews 6:17. In demonstrating the immutability of God's counsel, the meaning of that for the heirs of promise, and the confirming seal of God's oath, the professor from Mid-America Baptist seminary encouraged all to persevere in the Christian life. Why should we ever entertain doubts, have ambiguity, or be unclear regarding God's willingness to redeem and to keep? God has spoken over and over, and has shown Christ and his righteousness. Christ has completed his mission of redemption; he has not failed. What a comfort and motivation this is to those who labour in the proclamation of the gospel!

In line with the conference's statement of principles, historical papers were read during the week. Jim Carnes, a student at Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, presented a biographical sketch of Benjamin Keach. Many Baptists of history remain in obscurity. Sadly, for many, Keach belongs to this group. However, through this interesting and enlightening presentation Keach quickly became familiar to the conference participants as a great reformer of the church,

both in Great Britain and America. Many were influenced in both countries through Keach's hymns and voluminous writings, and his legacy remains with us today.

Dr Tom Nettles spoke again and took two sessions to examine the roots and fruits of the invitation system. Using various historical illustrations and reading from many sources to show the rise of that system, its inherent dangers, and the many abuses associated with it, perhaps this was the most sobering of the presentations at the conference. Because of the dangers, a convincing case was made for getting rid of the invitation system in our churches, for even in the best of minds the tendency will exist to attribute to human effort that which only can be attributed to Christ and his work.

Drawing from Isaiah 6, Pastor Sam Tullock from Dallas, Texas, reminded the pastors who faced hardships in the work of reformation that there exists a theological and spiritual fortress which must be built piece by piece, and when in place will be a wall of protection for God's servants. The pastor who has a right view of God, recognizes that he is the recipient of the grace of the Lord Jesus, remembers that God has called him to service, and recognizes that God is absolutely sovereign with regard to the results of the ministry.

A practical exercise in evangelism was included in this year's programme, with participants travelling to downtown Memphis for street preaching and tract distribution. What surely was a display of God's providence occurred during this evangelistic effort. In the very place where the gospel had been preached, and individuals had been exhorted to prepare for eternity, a police chase ended in tragedy with the fleeing fugitive losing control of his automobile and seriously injuring a number of bystanders. To those of us who had warned men and exhorted them to flee to Christ, it appeared that God was placing his exclamation point after the message just preached: 'Prepare for eternity!'

In light of the contemporary religious scene, and especially the dangers and abuses of the modern invitation system, the conference was needful, and provided many helps for pastors and churches wrestling with the problem. The 1988 conference, scheduled for August 2nd-5th at Rhodes College, is planned to consider the topic of revival, with J. I. Packer scheduled as keynote speaker.

George Martin, Kosmosdale Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky.

AND WHAT ABOUT 1988? *(continued from page 26)*

claiming, preaching ministry, and the clear statement that 'the pope has no jurisdiction in this realm' (Article 37), has been flatly denied. All has been achieved by a cunning use of semantics; juggling with words; skilful ambiguity: double meanings. How deceitful this is! Imagine a physician studying carefully how he could write his prescription for the pharmacist to read either *aspirin* or *arsenic!* A sacrificing priesthood is the exact opposite of a proclaiming preaching ministry. Also words which warn are changed. For example with regard to the pope 'infallibility' becomes 'indefectibility'. What is the difference?

All the dioceses in England have passed the Final Report, as has the Synod. The next step is momentous. It is to take place in July 1988 when all the bishops from the Anglican Communion worldwide are due to gather at Lambeth Palace to endorse ARCIC II. Is it not ironic that the crossroads is before us in 1988? In the very year when we remember 1588 and 1688 a further monumental decision is to be made, perhaps fatal, which will reverse 450 years of history (England became Protestant in 1534), and lead to parliamentary legislation which will hand over the Church of England to the Pope of Rome?

1588 and 1688

Two Significant Anniversaries

Pastor John Palmer, Parbold Evangelical Church

1988 sees the anniversary of two deliverances of our land from Roman Catholicism. In the year when the Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops will be considering the ARCIC report, and therefore debating whether to change the official doctrinal position of the Church of England, we have the opportunity to remind ourselves that God can and does thwart even the most thorough plans of men. This is the lesson of 1588 and 1688.

In the former year, King Philip of Spain sent out a great Armada to conquer England. Philip II was the widower of 'Bloody Mary', who was Queen of England 1553-1558. He was a fanatical Catholic who used his armies and the terrors of the Inquisition to try to stamp out Protestantism wherever he could. On Mary's death he sought to marry her sister Elizabeth, whom he had always preferred to his wife. She replied that she could not marry him because she was a heretic! Philip thus plotted to overthrow her.

The original idea of the Armada was to set Mary, Queen of Scots, on the throne. She was Elizabeth's cousin and therefore heir to the English throne, and also a Roman Catholic. However, Elizabeth discovered two successive Spanish ambassadors were involved in plots to assassinate her. Mary was also implicated in these plots, and Elizabeth had her executed. So Philip, who had a letter from Mary naming him as her heir, sought the throne for himself. He agreed with the pope that he would make the exiled Cardinal Allen Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury. The pope had already denounced Elizabeth as one so bad that 'whoever sends her out of the world, with the pious intention of doing God service, not only does not sin but gains merit'. No ecumenical soft-talk there!

The Armada sailed at the end of May. It was to take a Spanish army from the Netherlands to conquer England. In addition, there were twenty thousand soldiers on board; and a Catholic rising was confidently expected. Philip had been misinformed. In the south of England there were very few Catholics left, and most of those were loyal to the Crown despite the pope's instructions to the contrary.

The English navy had just undergone a revolution in ship design. To cope with the Spanish galleons, smaller and more manageable ships were being built. These were intended not to come alongside the enemy for hand-to-hand combat as in the past, but to 'run rings' around them, firing repeatedly at a large, stationary target, while presenting only a small, moving one. It was this change

in tactics which proved decisive and it is this, rather than any actual part in the fighting, for which Sir Francis Drake deserves the credit.

Because of contrary winds it took the Spanish fleet the whole of June and July to reach the English Channel. Their instructions were to proceed to the Dutch coast and there to take on board the army of the Duke of Parma. They were shot at by the English navy, who followed them up the Channel, until they anchored off Gravelines. Here they found that Parma's army was not ready. Parma himself, who had a better claim to the English throne than Philip, did not believe the invasion could succeed and did not want it to do so. He had therefore made insufficient preparation.

While the Armada was at anchor the English sent fireships amongst them. These caused no major damage, but resulted in the Spanish cutting their anchors. Then the wind began to blow them north-east, and then north, away from the Netherlands. The English simply followed. The Armada was blown about the seas for months. Forty per cent of the ships were lost, and two-thirds of the men, mostly due to disease or starvation caused by running out of edible provisions. Many ships were wrecked on the Irish coast in the autumn gales.

Elizabeth struck a victory medal with the legend, 'God blew and they were scattered'. This was an accurate assessment of what had taken place. The Lord had saved Britain from similar atrocities to those of the Netherlands, where 100,000 Protestants died in battle, under torture, or by execution. The Reformation was allowed to grow and produce the full flowering of Puritanism. The next hundred years saw many political and religious changes before the battle for the Protestant faith was won, in a way which was intended and must have appeared to be final.

1688, and a sinister threat of a different kind

In 1588 the threat to the gospel had come from overseas. In 1688 it came from the British crown. After the death of Cromwell thirty years earlier, there had been a groundswell of opinion in favour of the restoration of the monarchy. In 1662 the Great Ejection had forced Puritanism out of the Anglican church, and into persecution under Charles II. When he died in 1685, his brother ascended the throne as James II. He was an open and fanatical Romanist. He was also an extremely obtuse man!

His reign began well for him. The Duke of Monmouth's rebellion led to a great rallying behind the King. Even the 'Bloody Assize' which followed the defeat of the rebellion, and the brutal sentences of death and transportation handed out, did not alienate public opinion. The Anglican Church, believing firmly in the 'Divine Right of Kings', was solidly behind James. Jeffreys became Lord Chancellor, and upheld the King's right to dispense with all laws.

In 1687, James issued the 'Declaration of Indulgence'. All laws against both Catholics and Non-conformists were to be suspended. This sounds laudable, albeit unconstitutional. However, the idea behind it was for Catholics to take

over the Church of England, the army, the judiciary, and political positions from all of which they were forbidden by law.

The Non-conformists were not fooled. They remembered how Louis XIV of France had treacherously revoked the Edict of Nantes two years before, and virtually wiped out the flourishing Huguenot community. They did not believe James was seeking their welfare, rather, as Lord Halifax stated, that they were being 'hugged now only that they may be better squeezed at another time'. Non-conformist leaders told the Anglican leaders that they would not accept their new freedom at the price of freedom for Roman Catholics to take over the country.

In May 1688 James foolishly ordered the Declaration of Indulgence to be read from all Anglican pulpits on two successive Sundays. This was equivalent to asking the Church of England to pronounce its own death warrant. Almost all the Anglicans refused. Seven bishops presented a petition asking not to be forced to compel those of their clergy who thought the Declaration illegal to read it. James' response was to cause them to be tried for seditious libel, which was a capital offence.

The trial of the seven bishops was an extraordinary affair. The courtroom was full of their supporters and thousands were outside. Statements by the prosecution met with hissing. After being locked up all night, a jury which included the King's brewer acquitted the bishops. They were carried shoulder-high through the cheering crowds. Bonfires were lit, and church bells rang. Many of James' ministers, seeing the way the wind was blowing, resigned. In the absence of Parliament, which James refused to call, a cross-section of leading Englishmen sent for William of Orange, the husband of James' daughter Mary, asking him to come with his army and depose James.

William embarked. The 'Protestant Wind' blew him westward down the Channel, and he landed in Torbay on November 5th. James marched his army down to Salisbury Plain, and taking fright retreated to London. Many deserted his army and joined William's. James fled to France, but was recaptured by some fishermen in the Channel, and brought back to London. William allowed him to escape again, and he reached Calais on December 25th.

The political results of the abdication (in Scotland James was deposed by Parliament), were incalculably great. It secured liberty of conscience and parliamentary democracy. The Bill of Rights gave toleration to all Trinitarians except Roman Catholics. The Act of Settlement ensured that no Roman Catholic, or person married to one, can stand in the line of succession to the English throne. In Scotland the monarch is bound to uphold Presbyterianism.

The Armada was defeated by God's providential control of the weather. The efforts of James were defeated by his own arrogance, in thinking he could impose Romanism on a nation which detested and feared it. Yet here surely we can see God's hand at work. He 'frustrates the ways of the wicked' (Psalm

146:9). He has given us three hundred years of increasing freedom for the gospel. What have we done with it? Surely the Church must repent of its lukewarmness. Are not the current ecumenical events allowed by God to urge us to work 'while it is yet day'? Where are the voices raised both for the gospel and against papal domination? We must pray that God will not cast us off; rather that he will defeat the false unity of ecumenism, and give future generations cause to rank 1988 with 1588 and 1688, as a year of the Lord's deliverance.

And what about 1988?

Speaking at a rally at Belvidere Road Church, Liverpool, on September 29th, David Samuel, the director of the Church Society, drew attention to the fact that the first of the Ecumenical covenants had been formed on Merseyside, and that the first effort to counteract the false unity represented by the syncretism of that movement had also begun in the same area with the forming of MGW (Merseyside Gospel Witness). The MGW led by men of different churches and representing evangelical churches of different denominations was designed to unite all who believe in justification by faith alone. Dr Samuel expressed the hope that similar initiatives to unite evangelicals would follow in other parts of the country, especially since Ecumenical covenants, organized by full-time ecumenical officers, are being planned in a concerted way throughout Britain.

He reminded us that the new alignment with the Church of Rome began 21 years ago when archbishop Ramsay visited pope Paul VI, the first such visit to a pope since the Reformation. A commission was set up at that time to bring the Roman and Anglican communions together. Thus ARCIC was born (The Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission). Subsequently agreed statements have been made; on the Eucharist 1971, the Ministry 1973, and Authority 1975 and 1981. Such was the progress made that Clifford Longley, the religious correspondent to *The Times,* could suggest in 1982 at the time of the papal visit to this country, 'Now Anglicans for the first time could greet the pope as their pope.'

The final ARCIC report was passed by all the synods of the C of E and published on February 14th 1985. The next day Clifford Longley wrote, 'At about noon on February 14th, 1985, the Church of England through its representative body declared its willingness to take into its system the office of the universal primate, the Bishop of Rome. That was an historic moment!'

Step by step the temperature in the pot has been raised so that the frog will not take fright and leap out. Note the emphasis on *Final.* The FINAL ARCIC REPORT has been passed. Every relevant statement of the 39 articles of faith has been contradicted. Justification and sanctification have been synthetized. A sacrificing priesthood has been agreed to, contrary to the concept of a pro-

(continued on page 22)

Youth Work Today

A review article of the book Christian Youth Work *by Mark Ashton, Kingsway Publications, Eastbourne, 1986, £5.95*

What are our priorities when it comes to the young people? Do we go all out to attract maximum numbers to young people's meetings? Should we concentrate on reaching outsiders or on discipling young Christians? How should we relate youth work to church life in general? Who should be responsible for youth work? Should every church have a young people's meeting even if there is no one suitable to lead it? What is the role of 'para-church' organisations? Should we press for decisions in evangelistic work among teenagers?

All these and many other highly relevant questions are addressed in this most stimulating book by Mark Ashton, who until recently was Secretary of C.Y.F.A. (Church Youth Fellowship Association). Refreshingly free of anecdote or personal allusion, the book still conveys the author's evident wealth of experience in this field. It is most helpful also to have this contribution from one who has obviously been involved in a wide variety of contemporary youth work, and yet who is willing to question many assumptions implicit in current practice – especially the 'big event', 'count the decisions', 'showbiz', mentality.

The book is not a manual telling the reader how to run a Y.P.F. meeting. Rather it explores the biblical foundations which should underpin the approach of the *whole* church towards young people. The work is equally valuable for elders, Christian parents, and indeed any concerned adults. All hardpressed pastors with no time to read the whole volume could usefully examine the 'five point strategy' (pp. 202-213), with a marvellous vision of how young people should be provided for. The strategy is followed by the section 'Great ideals, but grim realities' which outlines the real problems which can militate against the ideal. The strength of the book is the balance between vision and reality, high ideals and experience of practicalities.

Some of the key points

1. The very real challenge of the problems facing young people today is explored in the first two chapters. Such problems include the influence of TV; t e current materialistic world view; the pressures on the family and the impact of unemployment. As adult Christians we shut our eyes to these things at our peril.

2. Youth work is not Christian unless it presents young people clearly with the Gospel and the consequences of rejecting it. What the Bible has to say about children and young people is well laid out, with excellent reference to both Old and New Testaments.

3. While the primary need for conversion is clearly presented there is much wise advice on the in-advisability of pressing for quick decisions. Rather we should recognize that conversion is often a gradual process.

'The challenge to decide must be faithfully made – the Cross demands that – but we must be reluctant to hang "saved" or "unsaved" labels too hastily around our young people's necks.' In other words we have no infallible knowledge of exactly *when* God regenerates a person, but we can constantly ask whether a young person is 'spiritually hungry' and persevere patiently with the faithful work of the undershepherd leaving the eventual outcome to God.

There is the call to look beneath the surface of exciting big meetings or emotional atmosphere – superficial impressions can obscure real spiritual need.

4. Linked with the above is a most helpful stress on the need to convince and persuade; the appeal of *wisdom* to the young person in Proverbs is opened up. Too often the emotions of young people are played on, and the mind is bypassed. An incisive quotation from John White makes the same point:

> 'Jesus wept? Jesus weeps. He weeps over sheep fed on lollipops. . . . He weeps over poor, deceived young people who are falsely taught by enthusiastic preachers that an instant, subjective experience at a special conference will solve all their problems and give them a zippy, automatic Christian joy for the rest of their lives. Garbage! Lying and devilish garbage – that leads young people to despair, to frustration, and to the terrible sense that if things go wrong, God has abandoned them or they have failed.'

5. Although there is a tremendous stress on the need for clear *teaching*, there is a very convincing critique of our obsession with the 'classroom' approach limiting Christian doctrine to 'talks' in meetings. Christ discipled the twelve by *living* with them, letting them see and learn from his responses and day by day attitudes and actions. The author stresses how essential the example of older Christians is. Christian adults need to spend time with teenagers, not in more meetings, but rather inviting one or two to share in family life and activities. Teenagers need to see Christianity in practice.

Women could invite teenage girls to share in some of their day to day activities so that they may learn by doing rather than just by hearing. A Christian youth worker could occasionally ask a young learner driver to drive him to meetings, giving the learner practice in driving as well as the opportunity for fellowship.

The importance of one-to-one counsel is stressed as well as the importance of concentrating on personal, individual commitment.

> 'Sometimes hungry sheep starve because their shepherds are too busy entertaining goats' (p. 125).

6. There is a most refreshing emphasis on the importance of integrating young Christians into the local church. Loyalty to the local church is seen to be important. Sometimes young people's groups tend to degenerate into seedbeds of criticism of the church leadership or the more traditional older members. It is also emphasized that the local church must come before para-church youth organizations. There is a good deal of helpful advice on how to nurture children from Christian homes. It is recognized that such children often benefit greatly from the friendship and counsel of adults outside their own families.

7. There is a thought provoking challenge to youth leaders on the extent to which we present our young people with the implications of Creation. A Creator God surely lays claim to obedience in *every* area of life. Young people need to learn *how* to apply their faith to all aspects of living and thinking. All too often we tell young people what to think or what to do, rather than teaching them why they should do so. They need to learn *how* to think through ethical and other problems.

In conclusion, this is a consistently helpful book which continually points to the need for quality rather than quantity in our youth work. The ability to speak with youngsters on a one-to-one basis about spiritual things is given as much emphasis as leading meetings. The quality of the spiritual lives of Christian young people is to be our primary concern, for young people themselves will be effective in evangelistic outreach to other teenagers.

Sharon James.

South Africa –

annual conference report

John Rees

The highlight of this year's conference was the systematic exposition of an entire book; the prophecy of Habakkuk. This provided a focus to the sessions, and Palmer Robinson's survey threw new light on the prophet – even for those who had preached through it on several occasions. The stress was practical – the Christian *lives* by faith, the 'righteous shall live by their faith' does not just refer to the conversion experience. Palmer Robertson also contributed a useful and relevant paper on 'Tongues and Prophecy Today'. His papers were warmly received, but equally appreciated was his pastoral concern for all present, as he made a real effort to speak to and encourage as many as possible. This aspect of informal encouragement and fellowship is surely as important as the more formal teaching sessions. Clive Tyler spoke of the History of Revivals in the Church of Scotland. Remembering the way in which God has acted in great power in the past is always an incentive to bold prayerfulness and trust as we look for the extension of the kingdom in our own day. A paper on the Grace of God by Fabio Escurio was particularly appreciated by some of the young people present, who claimed afterwards to understand the Sovereign Grace of God more clearly than ever before. The providence of God was the topic opened up by Trevor Marshall, and Flip Buys spoke on the relevance of the Fourth Commandment today.

A range of excellent literature was available and the enjoyment of the conference was enhanced by having an extra day which enabled discussion and fellowship to take place in a more relaxed way than on previous occasions.

A black pastor who attended wrote as follows:

> 'It was wonderful to sit under the exposition of Habakkuk by Professor O. Palmer Robertson. Today, like Habakkuk we see iniquity, wickedness, destruction, violence, strife, contention, law ignored, justice never upheld, wicked surround the righteous, justice perverted (1:1-3 N.A.S.B.). God's answer to Habakkuk is still the same to us. "But the righteous will live by his faith" (2:1). God still pronounces the five woes to perpetrators of violence (2:6-20). Upholds the same plans about the deliverance of his people (chapter 3).
>
> God's people were nice to me at Skogheim. I did not feel out of place a single moment.'

Jonathan Edwards –
a review of the new biography

Michael A. G. Haykin

Five years or so ago this writer was given a copy of the first volume of Iain Murray's life of Dr. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. It was used by God to initiate a profound revolution in his theological perspective and to spark an unquenchable love for the doctrines of grace. It was with great anticipation, therefore, that he picked up this new work by Murray on an earlier representative of the Reformed tradition, Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). He was not disappointed.

Iain Murray has been involved in the study of Edwards for some time. His articles on Edwards in *The Banner of Truth* stretch back to 1975. Moreover, this new biography of Edwards reveals that he not only has an excellent grasp of Edwards' life and writings, but is also well acquainted with modern scholarship on the eighteenth century divine. Murray, however, views Edwards in quite a different light from the majority of modern interpreters. Authors such as Ola E. Winslow and Perry Miller are representative of many in this century who have regarded Edwards as essentially a tragic figure. From their perspective, his great intellect was shackled within the confines of Calvinism. In his introduction, subtitled 'On Understanding Edwards', Murray rightly insists that this perspective grossly misrepresents Edwards, for he can only be understood when he is seen for what he was predominantly, namely, a Christian and a teacher of the Christian faith. When he is viewed in this light, the result, as the blurb on the dust-jacket asserts, is 'a biography which is both factually and theologically reliable'.

Moreover, Murray's study of Edwards' life and work is not merely academic. He is very concerned that the recounting of Edwards' life should inform and influence the present generation of believers. For instance, in the midst of detailing the events of the Northampton revival of 1734-1735, Murray points out:

> Possibly the greatest practical lesson from the 1735 revival for the pulpit of our day is that when ministers have to deal with indifference and unconcern they will simply beat the air unless they begin where the Holy Spirit begins, 'When he is come he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment' (John 16:8) (p. 130-131).

Edwards was enabled to preach with conviction and power throughout this revival and afterwards because he often experienced in private prayer and study a 'sense of the glory of the Third Person of the Trinity, and his office as Sanctifier; in his holy operations, communicating divine light and life to the soul' [p. 146]. This fact leads Murray to generalize:

> True heart-searching, humbling and convicting preaching requires an experimental acquaintance with the Spirit of God on the part of the preacher.... Only as men are in a vital relationship to God, and endued with the Holy Spirit, will the world come to the truth (p. 132, 145).

A second example comes from the events which transpired after the Great Awakening in 1740-1742. In the wake of the revival came fanaticism and 'wild-fire' preachers like James Davenport. Edwards' eventual response to these excesses, and those guilty of them, came in the form of a series of sermons analysing the nature of genuine Christianity. These eventually found their way into print in a modified form as a book entitled *The Religious Affections,* first published in 1746. In a chapter devoted to a discussion of this book, Murray (p. 249-267), leaves the reader with no doubts as to the present importance of this work for helping the Church discern what is and what is not true religious experience. As he concludes the chapter:

> However we assess the greatness of Edwards' *Religious Affections* as compared with his other works, there should be no question as to its first place in enduring relevance. The troubles of the 1740's were thus the means of bringing forth what is unquestionably one of the most important books possessed by the Christian church on the nature of true religion (p. 267).

Given this desire to allow Edwards to speak to our generation, it is appropriate that this biography concludes with a chapter entitled 'The Continuing Ministry', in which Murray outlines the impact Edwards' works have had since his death in 1758. Indeed, Murray stresses that Edwards' works have continued to be relevant throughout the past two hundred years for one main reason, they are rooted in biblical Christianity. Especially noteworthy for Baptists is the influence that Edwards' writings have exercised on some of our Baptist predecessors. For instance, Caleb Evans (1737-1791), principal of the Bristol Baptist College, believed Edwards to be 'the most rational, scriptural divine, and the liveliest Christian, the world was ever blessed with'.[1] His younger contemporary, William Carey (1761-1834), confessed that he was deeply stirred every time that he read Edwards' life of David Brainerd (p. 470 and n.1).[2] His *Journal* reveals that Carey's reading of Edwards also included a number of his sermons. One that he particularly mentions is 'The Most High a Prayer-Hearing God.'[3] Carey's friend, John Ryland Jr (1753-1825), so treasured the writings of Edwards and admired their author that he called one of his sons Jonathan Edwards Ryland.[4] John Sutcliff (1752-1814), yet another of Carey's friends and Carey's pastor at Olney before he went to India, was led by his reading of Edwards' *Humble Attempt to Promote... Extraordinary Prayer* (1748), to propose to his fellow pastors in 1784 that they meet on the first Monday evening of every month for united prayer 'that sinners may be converted, the saints edified, the interest of religion revived, and the name of God glorified'.[5] It was this monthly gathering for prayer which eventually gave birth to the Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, prompted a renewal of evangelistic efforts among the Particular Baptist Churches in Great Britain, and helped to bring about revival in these churches.[6]

In his concluding paragraph to this biography of Edwards, Murray notes:

> Jonathan Edwards . . . is being read today as he has not been read for over a century and in more countries than ever before. Such a recovery of truth has commonly been a forerunner of revival (p. 472).

As noted above, the wide reading of Edwards among English Baptists at the end of the eighteenth century did indeed lead to revival. Will the reading of Edwards in contemporary Baptist circles lead to another such time of spiritual renewal? One can only pray that it will be so. Meanwhile, in quickening even further interest in

Edwards' works and in the biblical Christianity with which they are replete, Murray's new biography of the eighteenth century divine cannot fail to hold a prominent place.

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[1] Cited Raymond Brown, *The English Baptists of the Eighteenth Century* (London, The Baptist Historical Society, 1986), p. 119.
[2] For a study of the influence of Brainerd on Carey, see A. de M. Chesterman, 'The Journals of David Brainerd and of William Carey', *The Baptist Quarterly,* 19 (1961), p. 147-156. Also see David B. Calhoun, 'David Brainerd: "A Constant Stream",' *Presbyterian,* 13 (1987), p. 50.
[3] See Eustace Carey, *Memoir of William Carey, D.D.* (London, Jackson and Walford, 1836), pp. 109, 158, 166.
[4] In his biography of Edwards, Murray appears to have confused John Ryland Jr with his father John Collett Ryland (1723-1792). In the index he gives three references to 'John C. Ryland'. The first, on p. xv, is indeed a quotation from the father with regard to his admiration of Edwards as a person. The second reference to 'John C. Ryland' is on p. 464 where he is described as an 'early nineteenth century English Baptist'. This has to be a reference to the son, for the father died in 1792. The third reference occurs on p. 470 where 'John Ryland' is described as an old friend of Andrew Fuller. This again is the son, and not the father. There is also a fourth reference, not enumerated in the index, which occurs on p. 481 and there the son is correctly denoted as 'John Ryland'.
[5] Cited Brown, *English Baptists,* p. 117.
[6] Murray's estimation of Edwards' *Humble Attempt* is to be noted. He writes, 'It is arguable that no such tract on the hidden source of all true evangelistic success, namely, prayer for the Spirit of God, has ever been so widely used as this one' (p. 299).

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9.00 a.m.				
Paul Helm The morality of heaven and hell	*David Kingdon* Independency and inter-dependency	PRAYER AND SHARING	*Erroll Hulse* Evangelism and the necessity of a Christian worldview	*Andrew Anderson* Exposition
Bob Sheehan Justification, Gospel works and Assurance	*Thom Smith* U.S.A. Dynamic church leadership			

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